



## **Teachers' Discourse Identities and Learners' Participation Opportunities in EFL Classroom Interaction: A Conversation Analytic Study**

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Identity has received a surge of theoretical and empirical attention within the past decades. A body of research on teacher identity mainly involved the feelings, beliefs, experiences and emotions of language teachers, which construct their professional identity. However, few studies (Antaki, 2012; Richards, 2006; Zimmerman, 1998) have investigated dynamic identities embodied through talk-in-interaction, and more particularly in EFL contexts. Using conversation analysis (CA) as situated within a socio-cultural approach, this study intended to investigate EFL teachers' identity as is constructed in classroom interactions. In this regard, using observations and video-recordings, three EFL teachers' naturally-occurring classroom interactions have been transcribed in detail. Data analyses revealed that teachers and learners construct and display different levels of identity in their talk (Zimmerman, 1998). Nominating the students and entering them in question-answer sequence along with the subsequent questions, learners display their transportable identity. While learners produce transportable identity, they can significantly construct more talk and longer turns which may enhance their learning opportunity.

**Keywords:** classroom interaction, sociocultural theory, conversation analysis, interactional identities, participation

### **Introduction**

The notion of communication has been the point of departure of many studies in diverse fields including psychology, sociology, SLA and etc. The language learning field and especially SLA investigates the ways human beings convey meanings. Communication takes place when people share information through mutually understood sign and it can be divided into verbal and non-verbal forms. Language is the major medium for conducting verbal communication (Walsh, 2011). Through talk, we exchange not only sounds and meanings but some part of our character, belief, ideas, who we are and how we think. Above all, through language, we can "be things" (Gee, 2011, p. 2) or show our identity or to say it in another words, we can talk our identity (Gee, 2011); consequently, we need language to construct our identity (Weedon, 2004).

Interest to the concept of identity has been increased during the last decades and among researchers of variable fields especially SLA researchers. Reviewing previous studies in SLA reveals that many researchers regarded the concept of identity in their investigations (Cross, 2006; Gee, 2014; Norton, 1997) but among the vast bulk of surveys which studied the identity development of teacher and learners, few studies regarded teacher identity construction through perspectives of conversation analysis (CA). The present study is a conversation analysis inquiry which concentrates on the effects of EFL teachers' interactional identities on learners' participation and attempts to present influential knowledge of teacher identity (TI). Influenced by Vygotsky's (1987) Socio-Cultural Theory which emphasizes on the importance of interaction in learning and participation, this study attempts to investigate teachers' interactional identity and their effects on learning potentials of the learners, i.e., whether the interactional identities that teachers assume in different contexts can lead to learners' participation or impede their participation. The next section will concentrate on research on teacher identity, which functions as a background to this study.

## Literature Review

Second language classroom context uses language as a medium for communication and transferring not only sounds but also meaning and information between people (Walsh, 2011). L2 classroom is a social context in which participants constantly interact with each other. Van Lier (1988) defined classroom interaction as the spoken discourse between and among participants of the classroom. In this sense, it refers to the communication between the teacher and learners using language. Recent studies on language education put the emphasis on significance of interaction in learning processes. Interaction, especially the interaction which occurs between teachers and learners, can serve as a driving force in learning of the students (Walsh, 2011). To highlight the importance of interaction in second language learning, researchers (Krashen, 1982; Swain, 1985; Van Lier, 1988; Walsh, 2011) stated that providing participant opportunities for learners in classroom discourse is crucial for development of second language competence. Therefore, Teachers' awareness of their interactional practices determines the quality of interaction and thus the participation opportunities that they may provide (Walsh, 2006). Among such interactional practices, teachers' interactional identities can serve as a basis to promote the quality of interaction.

## Teacher Identity and Second Language Education

There was an increasing interest among researchers to study the concept of teacher identity during the last decades (Clarke, 2008; James-Wilson, 2001; Richards, 2006; Sutton, 2000). The debate between psychologist and sociologist considering identity as a concept that is related to the individual (the self) or the social role that people play, has influenced the way researchers study the notion of teacher identity.

The concept of serving as a teacher entails two domains of teachers' work and life. The first domain involves their role and function in the institutional environment, what they do, how they assess the students, how they design materials and, most important than others, how they conduct classroom interaction. The second domain is related to teachers' beliefs, emotions and cognition. These two domains can be related to the social and the personal (the self) senses of identity. Personal identities of teachers are considerations of their understanding of their knowledge, beliefs, emotions and motivations; the social sense of teachers' identity is linked to their professional actions in performing their role. It is stated that teachers' beliefs, emotions, their judgment about models of good and bad teachers and their definition of teaching are constructed in a long process which can be rooted in their experiences as learners (Borg, 2004; Melderez et al., 2007).

In this regard, Basalama and Machmud (2018) point out "in understanding a teacher, one should understand their teaching and their identity shaped" (p. 42). By enrolling in teacher education program,

the experiences are fed by theoretical and professional knowledge (Johnson, 2008) and shape the notion of teacher identity. When teachers start their classroom practice, they get a tangible sense of their role as a teacher. Teacher identity is not a fixed entity rather it should be considered as a process that evolves and changes as teachers get experienced in their classroom practice, follow plans for their personal and professional development and negotiate with their fellow teachers (Goognough, 2010; Kanno & Stuart, 2011). Trent (2013), for example, contends that language policy can shape teachers' professional identity and their positioning.

Teacher education programs concentrate on the development of foreign language competence and teaching skills. Danielewicz (2001) stated that teacher education programs indirectly concern teacher professional identity because as students participate in teacher education programs, they are not teachers, however, at the end of their education. They embrace the identity of teacher which can transform or evolve when they start their job and gain experience.

Through demanding teachers to categorize their knowledge into three domains of content, pedagogy, and didactics, Beijjard, Meijer and Verloop (2004) defined teacher identity as what teachers do. Goodnough (2010) defined teacher identity as “teacher beliefs, values, and emotions about many facets and being and becoming teachers” (p. 168). By learning how to teach, teachers can develop their self-understanding about being a teacher. Teacher identity “is continually formed, informed and reformed over time and with experience” (Cooper & Olson, 1996 as cited in Goodnough, 2010, p. 168). Experience has an important role in organizing and reorganizing teacher identity. Lamote and Engles (2010) explored student teachers' conception of their professional identity at various phases of their education. The results revealed that while students earn workplace experiences, their ideas about teaching and their opinions about “self-efficacy in classroom management” (p. 14) change. The findings of Meijer, Graff, and Merinik (2011) suggested that teachers consider their development as a fixed process which can ascend after getting experience. In another related study, Nagatomo (2011) found that pre-service teachers' professional identity was shaped by their real and imagined relationships with their learners and their daily experiences.

## **Identity and Interaction**

Dynamic view of identity considers identity as a process which is constructed in the interaction. Gee (2000) provides a dynamic framework which is usually used as an analytic approach for investigation of identity in a variety of contexts. His dynamic approach in his definition of the concept of identity requires concentration on how people recognize their identities, how these identities influence their self, pedagogy and character, and the power structures that shape them. Gee (2000) regards identity as being known as a certain “kind of person” (p. 99). He classifies four types of identities that may synchronize with an individual person and an event including: Nature Identity, Institution Identity, Discourse Identity, and Affinity Identity (Gee, 2000).

Zimmerman (1998) explores the concept of identity in relation to talk-in-interaction or discourse (which he uses the word to refer to talk-in-interaction). He regards identity as a contextual element in talk-in-interaction, i.e., “the domain of concentrated social activity pursued through the use of linguistic, sequential, and gestural resources” (p. 87). In his view, identity is a behavioral not a symbolic aspect of discourse, in other words people can construct their identity through their behavior and specifically through their talk. People's orientation to their own identities and their interactants' identities, while they take part in an interaction, may establish a connection between interaction at that moment and “encompassing social orders” (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 88) which assumes patterns of social actions.

By suggesting a framework, he categorizes identities into three types including discourse identities, situated identities and transportable identities. Discourse identity which is essential to the moment-by-moment organization of the interaction occurs when participants are involved in various sequentially organized activities i.e., talk in interaction. Situated identities are constructed within the borders of various types of situations. Transportable identities transfer with individuals to various situations. These

are usually visible identities which can be attributed to people based on the physical or cultural basis such as age, gender, nationality.

The present study uses Zimmerman's categorization of identity and Vygotsky's (1987) Socio-Cultural Theory as a framework in order to investigate the identities that teacher and learners display in their talk in interaction, especially in their question-answer sequence and whether the interactional identities that teachers assume in different contexts can lead to learners' participation or impede their participation.

### **Yes/No Questions and Preference Organization**

Due to the aim of this study for analyzing the displayed identities of teachers and learners in yes/no question-answer sequence in the classroom context mode, the body of the work on yes/no questions can be relevant to this study. Waring (2012) investigated yes/no questions in terms of learners' preferences. In her study, preference had been defined as "a structural organization in which the alternatives that fit in a certain interactional slot are treated as nonequivalent" (p. 726). In her view, the concept of preference used in CA indicates that all second pair parts are heard as having the equal status. According to Koshik (2003), the concept of "preference does not refer to psychological preference but to a structural relationship between parts of the sequence" (p. 76).

Koshik (2002) conceptualizes preferred responses as "those which align with the activity which the first pair part seeks to accomplish" (p. 1853). "Preferred responses are usually short, done without delay, and unmitigated. Dispreferred responses are often elaborated, delayed, and mitigated" (Schegloff, 1988b, 1995b as cited in Koshki, 2002, p. 1853).

Based on sociocultural perspectives, yes/no questions as one type of interactional practices that occur in classroom have significant role in constructing or obstructing learning opportunities. According to this view, learning takes place in contextualized activities between teacher and learners. Consequently, teachers' interactional practices such as taking first position action (asking questions) in yes/no question-answer sequence, might have influential effects on providing conditions for learners' learning. Furthermore, these questions are considered as means for developing interaction in learners' ZPD. "The value of ZPD lies in its potential for enabling consideration of the give and take in the teaching and learning process" (Walsh, 2006, p. 34). Therefore, the sociocultural researchers consider yes/no question as a tool which can be used to create collaborative learning but they do not address the role of displayed identities during the sequence of yes/no question-answer which is the focus of interest for this study.

### **Research Purpose**

The study reported here adopts the emic approach to provide a fine-grained analysis of question-answer sequences in the EFL classroom interaction on the basis of sociocultural theory (SCT) and conversation analysis (CA) methodology. A significant benefit of that conversation analysis to the study of SLA is to provide a detailed account of the instructional practices that either construct or obstruct the opportunities for participation (Waring, 2008) as well as the opportunities for learning. Since the interactional identities that teachers assume in different contexts can have influential effects on learners' participation, this study provides a closer apprehension of the production of TI in talk-in-interaction and the connections between teachers' interactional identities and learners' participation will be analyzed through the lens of CA. Since there are few studies in literacy which delved into the specificity of how teacher identity constructs or obstructs opportunities of participation, the study reported here adopted conversation analysis to extend the existing literature.

## Research Questions

1. What identities teachers display in the process of interaction in the classroom context mode to construct opportunities for learners' participation?
2. What identities learners display in terms of the production of preferred response in yes/no question-answer sequence?
3. What identities learners display with regards to the production of dispreferred response in yes/no question answer sequence?

## Method

Teachers' beliefs, emotions and expectations construct their personal identity and on the other hand their roles, experiences and behaviors build their social identity. Apart from personal or social identity, by assuming dynamic view toward identity, different identity levels that have been used in talk can be captured. Teachers construct and reveal different identities during their talk in classroom discourse. This study, which is a classroom centered research, aims to explore EFL teachers' identities during yes/no question sequence in interaction and their effect on learners' participation. Therefore, it takes conversational analysis (CA) as its methodological framework. CA is a way of analyzing social interaction. The usefulness of CA as an analytical tool, especially in applied linguistics, has been discussed by many scholars (e.g., Kasper, 2009; Kasper & Wagner, 2011). This study benefited from CA's framework in both data collection and data analysis. To obtain information, general characteristics of CA have been taken into account: recording naturally occurring data, transcribing it and analyzing the specific episodes of the data (Wong & Warring, 2010).

The present study is a case study. The purposes of the current study are in line with the features of case study because it explores an in-depth investigation of three cases, namely three EFL teachers, in their natural settings that are in their classroom and the phenomenon under investigation is the identities of these teachers. Therefore, this study is a qualitative, naturalistic classroom-centered research that used a case study design in which three cases (i.e., three EFL teachers) has been investigated using conversation analysis as a tool to analyze teachers' identities produced and revealed in classroom interaction. For conducting the present study, three teacher participants at three institutes of higher education in Iran were selected including Sana University of higher education, Adib University of higher education and Hadaf University of higher education. Through audio and video recordings, first spoken data were collected and then all lessons were transcribed in detail. Three EFL teachers' classes were video-recorded and their 90 learners were considered as the main participants of the study. The teachers allowed videotaping three of their sessions, for a total of nine 90-minute lessons, totaling approximately 14 hours, a reasonable sample size on which to draw conclusions in the light of evidence from previous studies (Seedhouse, 2004). A total of nine lessons and classroom observations were employed for analyzing data. Using CA analysis, the data was analyzed line by line resulting in a few observations regarding teachers' identities. when deciding on extracts to be included in this study aside from ensuring that a full variety of practices are reflected based on the detailed CA analysis of the three cases, the current study attempted to entail extracts from all three classes to highlight that the practices were not unique to individual teachers or learners. Furthermore, this paper made an effort to illustrate how EFL teachers' identities during yes/no question sequence in interactions were shaped and their effects on learners' participations.

## Results

Through analyzing the transcriptions of three participant teachers' classes, it was found that although classroom context mode occurs less than other modes in classrooms but it provides more opportunities for

learners' participation than other modes. Teachers by taking the discourse identity of questioner and asking yes/no questions can provide appropriate conditions for switching to the classroom context mode. As a result, the identities that teachers and learners reveal during yes/no question-answer sequence and their identities in the following turns of talk in classroom context mode are investigated and detailed extracts of the findings are provided. The following extracts are selected from the data which intend to display how the three participant teachers in our study used yes/no questions in their talk in classroom and how learners' answers to their inquiry are shaped and constrained by grammatical format of yes/no questions. Moreover, the transcripts show the way teacher and learners displayed their discourse identities and transportable identities and there is no evidence of referring to situated identity.

## Micro Analysis of the Extracts Based on Preference Organizations

### Preferred response: Discourse identity

This section presents the extracts in which learners produce preferred responses to teachers' yes/no questions and among the three levels of interactional identities introduced by Zimmerman (1998), only the first level is available. The first level in his category is discourse identity which is defined as those identities which are talked and constructed in the moment-to-moments of an interaction.

#### Extract One for Analysis.

- 265 T →D:o we ha:ve *such* a (0.2) school >for< ↑serving foo::d?=  
 266 L1 =Ye::s  
 267 T >Yes<?  
 268 L1 yes. I thi::nk  
 269 T Uhuh, >yes, yes< We have (0.1)  
 270 L1 And cooking  
 271 T ↑Really? Do::> we< ha::ve (0.3)a major for cooki:ng?  
 272 L1 No, it's uh (0.2) I don't know but eh in ° فنی حرفه ای °=  
 273 T =uha in فنی حرفه ای ye:s=  
 274 Ls = دانش(0.2) کار  
 275 T Yes, فنی حرفه ای(0.4) کار دانش (0.1)  
 276 L1 ↑it's good (...) مدرکشون  
 277 T Uhu::m. Certificate  
 278 L2 >Certificate<  
 279 L1 =Certifica::te (0.2)  
 280 T ↑... Everythi::ng can (0.2)be ↑professional, (0.4)even cook::ing, ye::s?

In the above extract, after watching the movie which was about a special kind of school in England, teacher and learners started talking about it. T3 produced two yes/no questions, by subject-verb inversion and rising intonation, the first one (line 265) for presenting the topic of conversation and the second one (line 271) for encouraging the learner to continue her talk. Learner's answers to both questions were in conforming type and were produced without pause or delay (Chutch, 2007). Teacher introduces the topic of conversation in line 265 while she asks a yes/no question and by her question, classroom context mode initiates. L1 gives a conforming response to her question and her positive answer causes the continuity of talk (as the negative answer could prevent the forward movement of topic). In addition to stating that there is a school for serving food, in line 270, L1 says "cooking" to make this point clear that there is even a major for cooking. In the next turn, teacher who found the topic's capacity for producing more talk asks the second yes/no question to seek further information. Note that, while the teacher asks yes/no questions, she is producing discourse identity of questioner and projecting the discourse identity of answerer to all of the learners, while L1 ratifies the projected identity (Zimmerman, 1998) the

information is exchanged between L1 and T3. The moment-by-moment flow of interaction reveals that both teacher and learner are responsible for constructing and managing the speech and there is no strict division of interactional identities in which the teacher is only responsible person for asking questions or providing information (Nakamura, 2010). In this extract the situated identity of teacher and learner remains intact and there is not an explicit evidence of transportable identity of participants. In her first uttered yes/no question, the teacher asks “do we have...?”. While she states the pronoun *we* in her question, she indirectly refers to her and learners’ transportable identities as Iranian people and by such implication; she indirectly brings herself to an equal rank with learners. It can be stated that due to teacher’s attempt to imply equality between herself and her learners by uttering the second-person plural pronoun “we”, even if this pronoun stated unintentionally, the interaction may be navigated to being a bit symmetrical. As Van Lier (1999) stated symmetry can be found in interactions constructed between partners of equal rank. Though participant of extract 1 may apprehend the implied transportable identity but do not oriented to it. In other words, they know that all of them are Iranian but do not directly refer to or act upon it.

**Extract Two for Analysis.**

- 349 T >which< one i::s bette::r? (0.3)Walki::ng in the ↑morning o::r walking in the: ↑evening?  
 350 L3 walki:ng in the (0.2)mor (0.2)morning(0.3)  
 351 L4 \$ not importa::nt \$  
 352 T = it’s important, bu:t >always< you ↑know (0.3) you kno::w some people said that  
 353 it is goo::d for the ↑body system >in ↑the morning< some people said that (0.2) no  
 354 scientist and >doctor::r< sai::d that in the morni::ng >yo::u know < you: give a↑ kind o::f  
 355 ↑sho::ck to yo::ur bo::dy becau::;se >you::’re sleeping< and you (0.3) ↑get up and ehh  
 356 then yo:u go on, go (0.1) for a:: ↑walk, it’s not good↑ in the evening (0.2) we:: don’t  
 357 know what to do, °actually°  
 358 L4 ju::st (0.1) >do< what yo::u (0.2)wa::nt  
 359 T → Ca::n I:: do it (0.4) any ti::me that I wa:nt?  
 360 L4 ↑yes (0.2) >yes<, beca::use you are ↑easy::: (0.2)  
 361 T → uha I shou::ld be satisfy:::ed?  
 362 L4 [yeah]  
 363 L3 [may I::?] I >thi:nk< (0.3)in the morni:ng it’s ↑bette::r  
 364 T →you thi::nk (0.2)>in the↑ morning is better?<  
 365 L3 >ye::s< beca:use we ↑give eh energy, we beco:me (0.3) ene::rgetic

The above extract is constructed through the collaboration of T, L4 and L3. In this extract, teacher and learners are talking about sport. Teacher asks a question to know learners’ idea about the better time for exercising. She provides more information by explaining an idea that is expressed by some scientists (line 352-357). Three yes/no questions are asked by the teacher in this extract, one of them is constructed by subject-verb inversion and the other two questions are constructed by rising intonation. The same preference organization can be observed in the second position actions, i.e., answers, which are provided by the learners. In line 359, the teacher constructs the first yes/no question by reversing subject and verb order and rising intonation (marked by?) in order to expand the talk and elicit more information from L4 and she projects the discourse identity of answerer to her learner. By producing conforming type answer (↑yes), L4 accepts the projected identity and after a brief pause (0.2) she extends her talk and elaborates on her positive answer to teachers’ question. In the next line (line 361), the teacher uses a “minimal receipt token” (Nakamura, 2010) which is “*uha*” to make it clear that she understands L4’s point and she continues her turn by asking a yes/no question to check her understanding of L4’s talk. This question is not constructed by subject-verb inversion and teacher’s rising intonation, reveals the kind of produced question. While L4 produces a conforming answer to teacher’s question, an overlap in talk takes place between L4 and L3 who tries to take the floor and participate in the interaction (marked by [yes] and

[may I::?]). In line 364, teacher produces the third yes/no question, which to some extent is echo of learner's talk and constructed by rising intonation. In the following turn, L3 elaborates on her answer by producing a positive short answer which is continued by providing her reason. By asking yes/no questions, the discourse identities of questioner and answerer are taken by the teacher and learners to elicit and disclose information beyond the question. By assuming the relevant discourse identities, participants try to co-construct the interaction dynamically. In line 361, the teacher assumes the discourse identities of questioner and repairer simultaneously as she indirectly suggests the better construction to the learner.

### Preferred response: Transportable identity

The third level of identity based on Zimmerman's (1998) category is transportable identity. It is defined as those identities which can travel with a person and are assignable or attributable at any time and place. In classroom context mode, due to participants' attempt to fulfill conversational goals instead of pedagogical goals (Walsh, 2011), we found more instances of transportable identity in learners' talk. Moreover, it can be observed in the extracts that whenever teachers address the learners and the learners display their transportable identity, they are able to produce more talk.

#### Extract Three for Analysis.

- 234 T →Mariam! A::re you ↑ambitious? (0.4)  
 235 L5 °umm yeah° (0.1) um I have a (0.2) e:nd, end °mea::ns° (0.1)  
 236 T →uhu, >you ha::ve a < go:al in ↑your li:fe?  
 237 L5 yeah I:: have a (0.3) goal in your li::fe uh for and I:: (0.2) uhh  
 238 T in what way?  
 239 L5 I : e I:: >study< (0.2) mu:::ch  
 240 T =you study (0.2) a lo::t  
 241 L5 >study<(0.2) a lo::t that uh uh arriving uhh um my goal  
 242 T ↑aha, do >you (0.3)want to< achi:::eve and fulfil:ll some go:::als?  
 243 L5 > ye::s<, a::nd (0.2)u::h I ha:ve to, I: want to be a a >dentist<=  
 244 T = aha::! You want to be ↑denti::st, so yo:u >have a lot of< thi::ngs to do::, you should  
 245 be hardworki:ng, ye:s?(0.3)You should be (0.2)study a lo:t, you shou:ld search about:  
 246 L5 search about?=  
 247 T =any new ↑informa::tion >that i::s< related to you::r (0.2) fu:ture plans.

In this extract teacher asks three yes/no questions and L5's answers to these questions are in preferred format. After working on some exercises that are presented on the book, by asking a yes/no question (line 234), the teacher shifts the material mode to the classroom context mode and presents the topic of talk to L5. The learner in a preferred format agrees with the teacher's inquiry and after a brief gap (marked by (0.1)), she extends her talk by stating that "I have a (0.2) end". In line 236, teacher takes the floor from the learner, who tries to explain to the teacher the meaning of goal in her talk, produces a minimal receipt token "uhum" and asks a yes/no question, which is constructed by raised intonation, to make the learner understood that she realizes her and seek confirmation from the learner. Moreover, in this question, the teacher indirectly repairs the learner and suggests "go" as a better equivalent for the word that is used by the learner. Both teacher's questions and learner's answers are at the service of extending the talk and fulfilling conversational goals.

In this extract, two categories of Zimmerman's (1998) interactional identity can be revealed: discourse identity and transportable identity. The interactional identities of the above extract are displayed as the teacher takes the discourse identity of questioner and projects the identity of answerer to the learner. As the study goes on the teacher takes the identity of repairer and the learner assumes the identity of information provider. In line 243, the learner reveals her transportable identity while she answers to

teacher's question by stating that "*I want to be a dentist*". As it can be seen in this extract, before asking a yes/no question, the teacher nominated L5. This direct nomination, which was not observable in the extracts as well as the questions that teacher asked in the subsequent turns, provided the appropriate condition for the learner to state her transportable identity in the interaction. Thus, it can be concluded that whenever learners talk their transportable identity, they can produce more talk. As a result, it can be concluded that it may be effective for teachers, who are more enthusiastic to construct interactional spaces for learners' participation, to address their learners' transportable identities.

**Extract Four for Analysis.**

- 834 T → do: we ha::ve any intolerant >person< in this class? (0.4) no one?  
 835 (( L4 raises her hand))  
 836 T → uha, here, Mahsa, >are< you int intolerant? (0.5)  
 837 L4 \$yes\$, ok, uhh (0.2)  
 838 T → can you tell me a thi:ng that (0.3) you:: canno::t to:lerate it, it is, it's show that yo::u  
 839 are (0.1) intolerant, ha::?  
 840 L4 \$I don kno::w\$ (0.5) uh whe::n (0.2) somebody speak (0.2) a lo::t >like my siste:r<  
 841 T → \$uhu:m\$ she is going on your nev,> ne::rve<?  
 842 L4 °ye::s very lot° and (0.3) uh I can't (0.2) be::: uh >tolerant< with (0.2) he::r  
 843 T → aha! So if(.) > any perso::n< ye:s? Maybe::: (0.2) \$your te:acher \$speak ↑a lot,  
 844 [you are intolerant?]  
 845 L4 [ no::: I mean](0.2) speak something stu:pid and eh (0.3) \$بيخود\$ (0.1). Last uh (0.3) sorry,  
 846 yesterda::y, my> siste:r< asked uh asked me a question for five, I think five ti::mes  
 847 T →she (0.2) asked a sa::me question::?  
 848 L4 ye::s [from]  
 849 T [for ex]ample can I take your boo::k? One minute later, Can I take your>book<?  
 850 L4 \$>yes, yes<\$ same question, every [ti::me]  
 851 T [the sa::me] question but (0.2) fo::r fi:ve times  
 852 L4 ye:::s  
 853 T so:: what's (0.3) >what was your< last (0.2) what (0.2)was you::r reaction?→Do:: you  
 854 get >angry<?  
 855 L4 \$yes\$, you know:: I (0.3)) know he::r, so (0.4) I uh umm try to::: just (0.2) calm down but \$I::  
 856 can't\$

The initiation and sustainment of the above extract, to a large extent, are owed to the seven yes/no questions that teacher asks and the discourse identities that on the one hand, he assumes by asking these questions and on the other hand, he projects to the learner. All of the answers that are produced by L4 are in preferred format. After reading a funny short story, the teacher asks a yes/no question (line 834) to introduce the topic of conversation to the class. The teacher introduces the topic of conversation by asking a yes/no question and L4 raises her hand to show her interest for taking part in the interaction and to imply that she can be classified as an intolerant person. It should be clear that although L4 does not produce yes or no for responding to the teacher's question, her answer is not regarded as a dispreferred response, because in dispreferred responses, a person who takes the second position action declines the grammatical limitation imposed by yes/no question and does not fill the first spot of answer but in line 835, learner's non-verbal behavior (raising her hand) can be implied as yes. The first two teacher's questions are produced for the sake of introducing the topic of conversation. After a brief pause (0.5), in line 837, learner assumes the discourse identity of answerer and responds with a smiley tone (marked by \$yes\$). Discourse and transportable identities are displayed in this extract. The main discourse identities are questioner and answerer which occur in yes/no question-answer sequence. Therefore, it can be seen that teacher nominated the student and this process along with subsequent questions asked by the teacher, helped the learner to display her transportable identity and acts based on them in the extract.

### Dispreferred responses: Discourse identity

During the analysis of the data, some of the learners did not constrain by the grammatical force of teachers' yes/no questions and produced non-conforming or dispreferred responses i.e., they did not fill the first slot of their answer with "yes" or "no". The analysis of the data revealed that, these types of responses are produced when teachers address the question to all of the learners and do not nominate any especial learner.

#### Extract Five for Analysis.

- 1338 T Do:: yo:u remember that: we had (0.2)↑foo::d teste::rs?  
 1339 Ls ye::s  
 1340 T yes (0.2) >why no::t?< ↑>where< did the:y wo:rk?  
 1341 L4 in (0.3) palace::e  
 1342 (( talk continues))  
 1349 T >what< did they do::? → did ↑they only:: serve foo::d?  
 1350 L1 → =control the::: (0.2)  
 1351 T kitchen  
 1352 L1 sta::ff  
 1353 T uhuh, very goo:d. control the >sta:ff< very good (0.4) do you: remember::r (0.2) ? did  
 1354 you wa::tch قهوه تلخ؟  
 1355 Ls (0.3) ye::s  
 1356 T → yes? Do:: you: remember the (0.3) the >food-tester< there?=  
 1357 L3 → =قرقی =  
 1358 L1 =the fa::t (0.1) gu::y  
 1359 T → yes, did you see::?=  
 1360 L1 →they (0.3)call hi::m (0.1) something like ↑آبدارچی  
 1361 L2 آبدارچی به همچین چیزی، تو ایران  
 1362 T The:y (0.2) ca:lled hi::m wha::t?  
 1363 L1 آبدارچی

In this extract, teacher and learners are talking about special jobs that had existed in the past. Five yes/no questions are asked in this study, two of the second position actions (answers) provided by the learners are in conforming type and the other three ones are in non-conforming type responses. Yes/no questions are asked in this extract with the aim of disclosing new information from the learners. Eighteen turns are exchanged; eight turns belong to the teacher, five turns to L1 and the five remaining turns to the other learners. The first non-conforming type response is produced in line 1350 by L1 in a latched talk (marked by =) following teacher yes/no question and in line 1355 after 0.3 second pause. The situated identity of teacher and learners in this extract, do not change. Thus, there is no evidence of transportable identity, only discourse identities are displayed in this interaction.

#### Extract Six for Analysis.

- 431 T ohh, let's see::: what we have he::re. (0.3) ((points to the picture)) do:: yo:u kno him?  
 432 He's [famo::us]  
 433 L3 (0.2)[yes] ye::s  
 434 L6 °Edwa::rd°  
 435 L1 \$he's handsome\$  
 436 T eh ye::s, >handsome< →Ca::n yo:u say [his]  
 435 L1 → [he's] ↑actor  
 436 T yes, >do you remember::r <a movie in which he ha::d a major ro::le?  
 435 L3 which (0.2) >movie<?

436 T → do you remember the name of his movie?

437 L1 → twilight, vam (0.3) vampire movie

In the above extract, the teacher asks three yes-no questions, one of the answers to the question is conforming type and two of them are non-conforming type. Teacher takes the magazine which was on the bag of one of the students, then points to a picture of one actor which is on the cover of the magazine and asks the learners whether they know him or not. In line 431, the first yes/no question introduces the topic to all of the learners. In line 436, the teacher asks second yes/no question to elicit more information, but before he finishes his question, an overlap occurs and L1 provide the answer (marked by [he's]) to his question which is a non-conforming answer. Also, the third yes/no question receives a non-conforming type answer from L1 to summarize, the identities that are displayed in this extract are discourse identities. There is not any evidence of situated or transportable identities of the teacher and learners.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The current study was a descriptive case study which attempted to investigate the production of teachers' and learners' identities in yes/no question sequence and subsequent turns. For conducting this study, we selected three teacher participants at three institutes of higher education in Iran. In this regard, the findings of the present study were based on the observation of three participant teachers and their nine lessons. For analyzing the collected data, we used a conversation analysis methodology and a line-by-line micro analysis of transcribed data within classroom context mode in natural classroom interaction was conducted.

The overall findings of the study showed that while learners answer to the teachers' yes/no question, they produce two types of answer: conforming type and non-conforming type and they orient to produce conforming type responses more than non-conforming types. While learners produce conforming type answers, they are oriented to display two types of identities: they display discourse identities when teachers address all of them and do not nominate them and they tend to display transportable identities when teacher nominates one of them through verbal or non-verbal behavior i.e., while producing non-conforming type answers, learners just produce discourse identities. Moreover, the micro-analysis of the data set displayed that yes/no questions have different functions in the interaction: they introduce the topic, elicit information, check understanding, and even indirectly do a repair.

Regarding the *first* research question, the findings of this study revealed that participant teachers have more tendencies to launch yes/no questions to elicit information from the learners. As Walsh (2006) noted "classroom discourse is dominated by question-and-answer routines" (p. 7) and most of the questions are asked by teachers, in other words teachers assume discourse identity of questioner more than other discourse identities in classroom talk. While they assume the discourse identity of questioner, they can project a reciprocal identity to the learners; leave the floor for learners' participation and help and support to maintain the conversation (Nakamura, 2010). Through analyzing the extracts, it was found that while the situated identities of teacher and learners remain intact, teachers are able to shape the discourse identities that learners produce (Nakamura, 2010) and also they can elicit learners' transportable identity.

Regarding the *second* research question, the finding of this study showed that learners mostly are constrained by the grammatical force of yes/no questions (Reymond, 2006) and begin the second position action (answering to the question) with yes, no or their equivalents, in other words they produce the preferred response. Analysis of the extracts revealed that while stating the type-conforming response, learners produce two levels of identity-in-interaction: discourse identities and transportable identities (Zimmerman, 1998). To sum up, with regards to the production of type-conforming responses, it can be said that whenever a teacher nominates a student, provides enough wait time, and asks the subsequent questions from that learner to elicit more information or check the confirmation, in addition to displaying

the discourse identities of answerer, information provider and sometimes narrator, students tend to demonstrate their transportable identity.

Regarding the *third* research question, the finding of this study indicates that in some rare occasions, learners are not confined by yes/no questions and produced non-conforming type answers, in other words they did not fill the short answer slot, do not respond with yes, no or their equivalents, while taking the second position action (Reymond, 2006). The non-conforming type can be considered as dispreferred format (Reymond, 2006). By investigating the extracts that contain non-conforming responses uttered by the learners (Extracts 5 and 6), it was found that these types of responses are produced when teachers address the whole class and do not nominate a learner, although it should be mentioned that all the responses produced in this condition are not non-conforming. Investigation of the extracts illustrated that when teachers do not nominate any learner and address the whole class, learners just display their discourse identities and it seems that they cannot find the space for producing their transportable identities.

This paper is by no means exempt from limitations that can be regarded as indicators of potential research directions and need to be addressed in future studies. Caution should be taken into account while reading the findings as the study was limited in some respects. First, the number of participants including three teachers was limited. Thus, it is suggested to include more teachers in future studies. Second, only a total of 9 sessions were video-recorded, given the dynamic and multifaceted nature of identity, more sessions should be video-recorded. Additionally, stimulated-recall interviews could be conducted by each teacher immediately after the observation to explore the teacher's emotions and perceptions of their learners' identities in response to the yes/no questions. Further research is warranted to study the relationship between learners' levels of language proficiency and built-in learner participation potential of teachers' identities.

The findings of the present study have implications that are noteworthy of attention. First, the findings raise teachers' awareness of the dynamic nature of identity development in general and their displayed identities in particular. Second, the results benefits the practicing teachers to create more interactional spaces for constructing and exploiting students' transportable identities. The results also suggest that teachers should use more *wh*-questions or referential ones that provide learners with more interaction space and opportunities to produce more non-conforming type answers and as a result they would not be confined by yes-no questions' force to produce conforming ones. Moreover, this study was an attempt to address teachers' identities in classroom interaction to inform teachers that their language use has a significant effect on their interaction with learners. In addition, the information about teachers' identities will help the teachers become aware of all the possibilities in deciding the appropriate interactional practices during interaction with learners. Finally, the current study also highlights the significance of designing materials geared to providing more opportunities for learners' talks in the classroom by focusing on both yes/no questions and referential ones, thereby learners can be free from the grammatical force of yes/no questions and show more transportable identity.

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## Appendix

### Transcription Notation

Conversation Analysis Transcription Conventions (adapted from Jefferson, 1983):

(.)	untimed perceptible pause within a turn
underline	stress
CAPS	very emphatic stress
↑	high pitch on word
.	sentence-final falling intonation
?	yes/ no question rising intonation
,	phrase-final intonation (more to come)
:	lengthened vowel sound (extra colons indicate greater lengthening)
=	latch (direct onset or no space between two unites)
→	highlights point of analysis
[ ]	overlapped talk; in order to reflect the simultaneous beginning and ending of the overlapped talk, sometimes extra spacing is used to spread out the utterance
°soft°	spoken softly/ decreased volume
><	increased speed
( )	(empty parentheses) transcription impossible
(words)	uncertain transcription
(3)	silence; length given in second
\$words\$	spoken in a smiley voice
(( ))	comments on background, skipped talk or nonverbal behavior
{{( ) words.}}	{ } marks the beginning and ending of the simultaneous occurrence of the verbal/ silence and nonverbal; absence of { } means that the simultaneous occurrence applies to the entire turn.
L1: L2: etc.,	identified Learner
"words"	words quoted, from a textbook for example